

Suggested Remarks

Steve Edminster, Governance Officer, USAID  
"Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in  
Mindanao" Book Launching  
Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City  
October 24, 2007, 9:00 a.m.

(Names of guests deserving special mention will  
be supplied on site)

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning.

On behalf of the United States Government, I am  
delighted to be with you this morning at the  
launching of the book, "Rido: Clan Feuding and  
Conflict Management in Mindanao." I would like  
to congratulate all those who made the  
publication of the book possible including The  
Asia Foundation (TAF) and, most especially, the  
various Mindanao-based institutions that  
conducted the groundbreaking research. The

book helps us better understand what "rido" is about, particularly in the context of the complex web of violence that afflicts Mindanao.

Peace and development in Mindanao are high priorities for the U.S. Government and the American people. In 2007 alone, the American people contributed more than \$40 million to support various development programs in Mindanao in partnership with the Philippine Government, the business sector and NGOs to spur economic growth, improve health, strengthen governance, protect the environment, increase access to education, and promote peace.

Although concrete gains have been made in recent years, development will continue to have

a hard time taking root if conflict dislocates people, and forces them to abandon their economic activities.

Mindanao is particularly vulnerable because of the tendency of endemic clan conflicts to interact with, or exacerbate, separatist conflict and other forms of violence. While separatist conflict dominates the international and local press, clan conflicts actually affect more people in Mindanao than clashes between the government and the MILF or the MNLF. A Social Weather Stations survey on conflict in Mindanao in 2002 revealed that 43% of respondents cited violence in their areas due to family, clan or tribal disputes as opposed to only 25% citing clashes between the military and separatist groups.

The studies in the book we are launching today describe the dynamics, triggers and management of clan conflict in order to help design strategic interventions to address such conflicts. We are very pleased to note that indigenous modes of settling conflict detailed in the book have been replicated in other areas to settle longstanding conflicts.

One very good example is the successful settling of the feud between the Tayuan and Mangansakan clans in North Cotabato early this year. Starting in the mid-1980s, the conflict between these two families displaced people in several barangays in the municipalities of Midsayap and Pikit, North Cotabato, and resulted in the loss of lives and destruction of property. For more than 20 years, members

of both families lived in constant fear that the slightest of causes would unleash a new wave of violence. However, they finally achieved peace when the United Youth for Peace and Development, an organization supported by USAID through the Conflict Management in the Philippines Project of TAF, applied insights and lessons generated from the studies of clan conflict in Mindanao. The United Youth for Peace and Development employed a series of dialogues with the elders of both families, and successfully convinced both clans to finally end their rido.

We are very happy that the U.S. Government, through USAID, was able to support the research on clan conflict and, subsequently, the

application of the many insights it generated to end clan conflicts in areas of Mindanao.

USAID will continue to support mechanisms to promote peace in Mindanao such as the strengthening of community-based dispute resolution mechanisms so that disputes are prevented from escalating into violence.

We also look forward to supporting peace in Mindanao through our other programs.

Thank you so much for the invitation to be a part of this book launching. The U.S.

Government and the American people are honored to be part of this effort.

Maraming salamat po at mabuhay kayong lahat!